

Why We Continue to Say Yes to FDLP – Transcript of audio

Hello and welcome to, Why We Continue to Say Yes to FDLP. My colleague, Helen Keremedjiev is providing tech support if you need assistance. I would like to share a few housekeeping reminders. Please use the chat box for questions, comments, and technical issues. We will keep track of the questions and answer them during the session. We are recording the conference and all registrants will receive links to the event. Please welcome our presenter, today Professor Billie Kaufman from Mercer University Law Library. I will hand it over to Billie to start today's session.

Thank you very much.

Do you need help with the slides, Billie?

Yes, I do.

I have it.

You need to go to the next set of slides.

I have it.

There you go.

Technical difficulties. I want to say, hello to everyone. I see 159 attendees at a program on Tuesday at 3:30. But, I think this is a great way. It is so fabulous for the FDLP to make these recordings available so that even more people can learn about the great things that are going on in our Federal Depository Library program. I have been attending a lot of meetings that are some law libraries specific and some other kinds. Every once in a while I would hear someone say, we think we are going to do away with the depository. So, I want to tell you first, a little bit about Mercer. Mercer's law library has been a depository for nearly 44 years. Next month is our birthday month. For a very small, private law school we do great. We are about one and half hours out of Atlanta. We are in Macon, Georgia. There are five law schools in the state of University Georgia. We are at the University of Georgia in Athens. We are at the Georgia State University lot in Atlanta. All of the Jon Marshall Law employees are here and institution and other members of the FDLP in the state of Georgia. Over the last few years, are depository have accepted degrees. Probably, as much as 15%. We operate under the American bar associations accreditation standards. Chapter 6 of that is our Bible and it aligns with all of the things that we need to do to maintain the library piece of the accreditation for the law school. There are some very specific sections in this, talking about our core collection. Whether we own it or have reliable access to it. Of course, we are supposed to meet the needs of the law school students and the curriculum and facilitate the curricular and scholarly work of the faculty. From time to time, we will have special programming clinics, international programming, so we have to have the collection that is of sufficient quality and currency to make sure that everyone has access to it. One of the library's main responsibilities is to formulate and periodically update a written plan for the development of the collection. That collection development policy goes with our accreditation document each time a site visit or a visit from the ABA and the American Association of Law schools and other programs. Obviously, in addition to the collection we have to have suitable space and adequate equipment to access collections. Let's look a little bit more in-depth about this collection development policy. Most schools, of course do it at the time that it has to be done for the site visit for the renewal of their accreditation. But, many of us have moved to looking, each year and updating it and looking at collections--what do we have? Because, over the last 10 or 15 years, many of our collections went from almost totally print, maybe some microform to wear many schools are now, leaning on the side of totally electronic. So, we began thinking that it was really better to look at that collection development possibility at a site visit and more portly, annually so we can catch and update and keep living documents, instead of something we just sent in and made a part of that process. A significant piece of our collection is of course, primary and federal documents. We receive many of those documents in many different formats with Westlaw

edge, Bloomberg, Lexis plus and many of us have subscriptions to congressional and legislative insight. Now, there are many free and low-cost site and databases. Many we have both in print and in electronic, both from FDLP and all of the other sources. I think that is what generated the conversation at conferences that I started with at the beginning of the presentation. But, do we need all of this? Do we need to really continue to say, yes and continue our selective depository status and still get these materials for the program? When we go back and forth with that conversation many, many times--it was a conversation that we would wait a lot of different matters with. I think many, many law school libraries were having that conversation and there were a lot of things going into the conversations.

Of course, there were costs to having the FDLP. I just had a chat with someone who was the Mercer law library director and she put the FDLP in place. She talked even back then about, what about the staff and the work that has to go into making this collection available? There always was that personnel conversation. And, there was the processing and cataloging and making those print and electronic records visible to people and easy to locate. Over time, when we started, we did some of that work ourselves. We learned to purchase those records from archive or from other cataloging operations because, as staff lessons we have outsourced some of that work. And of course, there was shelf processing of print. Many of these were duplicate or triplicate pieces of things we already had. So, when we kept taking all those things into consideration, it was, should I keep saying, yes? Should this really be something we continue to do?

The value for us, and we ran the numbers and dollars. We tried to put a calculus together of an entire look both with just the value of having the official document, whether it was print or electronic. And, the accessibility to the public. We believe in the mission of our law school that, access to justice and having access to those materials is incredibly important. And, will the databases always be here? Will they always include particular primary documents? Maybe yes, but will we be able to afford all of the databases forever? And, what if we had to cancel? What do we still on? What would be something we could still have and maybe, what if it goes away on the day we cancel? So, that, or not is a big part of the calculus.

We, at Mercer agreed the budget piece was pretty neutral. We ran the numbers, and on the percent of selections we did and the work and the calculus and the staffing time, when we did our homework and formula, we believed it was prudent to say, yes. And, we did that work. I think that anyone in the audience might be wondering, we heard that in the staff lounge. Or, we know that has come up on one of our agendas. Or, we weren't sure how to explain that to our Dean or our boss. How do we go about giving them the value? I think doing this work on a regular basis makes it easier and you can maintain that value and know what that value is with ongoing work. I think it is important to do that work and to do it regularly.

We do the same process, really with every acquisition we make, whether it is FDLP or a new title for a faculty member. So, when you just put it together with the part of your day to day operation and you do it regularly, you can adjust to any change. Maybe, an important faculty member leaves or retires, and that makes a difference in your total. Maybe, when you look at the surveys and monitor the use and usage, you find out that someone was using that collection and using it a lot, but you didn't have any idea. And then, your short and long-term thinking. Sometimes, a bad day or bad week, I just can't do this collection anymore. It is too much work and we don't have the staff and are not getting the benefit or the value. So, if you can look at it in short-term and long-term ways, it is a fair evaluation over all. And, deciding what you should do. I like doing it on a regular basis because I think, every September when we look at our collection development policy, this is a part of our collection. So, it is just another section we are evaluating and looking at

The FDLP task force looks at the all-digital FDLP collection, and I included the various titles and the links to those progress paperwork on this slide. But, that is going to have an impact. What is that were going to do? Is it going to matter? I think for many, many law libraries, we knew that access and

availability is going to meet our ABA standards. If we are already doing that with access with other sources, and this goes to a digital format and collection, it would just happen as a part of what we do on a day-to-day basis in the collection. That could have an impact, lowering our overall cost. There may be less work in dealing with the print piece of the collection.

I want to say that FDLP is cool and we use it to teach. We want our students to see the real documents. So, we keep saying yes. We would encourage each of you to do it and take a look. I think, when you say yes, it is really terrific to be able to have some data. If you have things you have looked at and you feel confident and you can be proud that you have done the homework and be able to defend that yes just like you would for any other piece of your collection, then you have done the work. Do I have any comments or questions on how you do development policies? If anyone has any questions or comments, I would be happy to take them. Does anyone have to prove the continuation of a collection, or have had to do it? I see that Jenny says that some states still require print source. I suspect that is true. They will have to develop how to meet that because you have to follow the law and the rules in each, individual state. Jesse is asking the question as to whether we have our documents in their own area or if they are integrated in the general collection. Generally, we do integrate some of them. We do classify and catalog everything so it is discoverable throughout the system. Elizabeth is by herself. So, you are deselecting about 95%. That is terrific. Did you willingly agree to be all of the manpower? Sometimes, it doesn't matter whether you agree or not, it is just what is worked out from above. It is hard because many of those materials are primary and need to be out on the shelves as soon as they come in. Student workers, Elizabeth terrific. I don't know where we would be without student workers? There is still shelf work that needs to be done. You ask the question, Jennifer if we weren't in it when we purchased some print. I suspect, when we did our calculus, for some things I think we would purchase from one of the other providers. I don't know now because if we were not in it, and I think many of my colleagues at many places that don't have a federal depository program, rely strictly on Westlaw, Alexis and Bloomberg materials. For the most part, having the congressional records and Federal Register and those kinds of materials in their with the good government website, I think that many would not purchase. You are asking about the metrics that library administrators use. I like to look at something more than cost and the cost of providing it. I am a real data person and I like to see that things are used. Many, many times I think we don't know. We had this happen. We were just about ready to cancel Bloomberg law and I spoke to the faculty and they often assume things. It was very interesting how vocal they were. Yet, they weren't vocal at all on a day-to-day basis. I would've never anticipated their desire for Bloomberg in that way. So, their voice and, not only the voice, but the passion of that voice and how to use it on a day-to-day basis. Are surveys weren't getting to those questions. So, I think testimony might be a good thing to call it. Those hidden metrics is where you find out somebody is doing a really data-driven thing or, they are doing a legislative history project and they knew something would be a problem. The question about giving up the hard volumes--we have given up some print volumes. Mostly, it was a decision based on space. If we had square footage and shelving and space, we would have kept them. So, I think that does make a difference. I think the tracking of certain statistics and the number of questions is really helpful, too because you can make a lot of assumptions that aren't based in fact. A lot of times [Inaudible Low Volume]

There is a process that we have to go through. Jenny, this exchange is a really good suggestion. You can sometimes find people that are interested in getting on those lists. Elizabeth said, training has changed for me. I think those of us who are operating such small shops with one staff member and a student and others, it is incredibly difficult. The people had worked at the library for over 30 years and they deserved to retire. But, really you just can't get some of that back. Certainly, not right away. So, that having an impact, I think. I see some of you are just selecting print for certain things. CFR is certainly one that we still get in print because we still like to do some assignments in our advanced research classes for the actually, get to touch real life print items and see the differences in the CFR and see how it displays in

the database. So, we do that, too. Laura makes a really good suggestion that part--and, I think there is a feeling of pride that when you have a depository library, it usually means you have one or more staff that really have great background and skill in providing and finding government information. Sometimes, it is a class or an LMS program for people that have been working with it for years. And, the knowledge they have is terrific. Jenny, that is another good thing. Is not just the student workers doing the work, but explaining to them all about the program. That is really a terrific thing. And, you have the only depository in the congressional district. That had to be a point of pride, as well. Having access to all of this information is just part of the peace of access to justice and democracy. Paul says, I train my students intensely when they start. That is true because there is a lot to learn, especially at the beginning. Not just the individual actions, but the importance of the materials they are working with. I think that was what was so difficult during the pandemic for us. Four months, we didn't have any student employees at all. Some things were not coming and others were backing up. One student at a time my be the bumper sticker that helps if you are not having to train a whole group. I do like that we thought enough of the program that we began to consider it as part of our entire collection development policy, and not just an off piece. Then, we look at it in comparison and we look at it in importance and we can run all the same calculations, as far as dollars, processing time, etc. I think we treat it a little more for Lee fairly, as a major piece of the collection instead of individual thinking. We are being asked about some training documents. I think there are some pretty good training documents on the site. A really good thing is, if you can find another depository that is near you. I think most of us are more than willing to come in and help get a new person started, or help a new program. I know for new programs, for sure there is a group that will help that happen. It is great to have somebody with that much background with the Department of Interior documents. We select so very few that we don't get into that high-level sophisticated selection of some of those more specific documents. But, that would be terrific to have somebody with that kind of background.

I think Susan raises a really good question. I think we can all market and explain to each other. That one level up, the head of tech services is probably going to be an easy sale. But, our Dean's and finance Dean's, sometimes that is harder. So, I think it is really a good thing to have. Many of the under Dean's like data. Virginia, how are you? I haven't seen you for a long time. It is great that they are doing internships. I guess if they are doing that in the law library, then they can make that part of practicum to work with the government documents. That is really great learning experience. That is a terrific thing to do. We are hoping we have some people that are interested in letting us do some externships and practicums because some of that gets missed in some of the online programs now because you are online and you can't visit and touch the things the way they used to. That is terrific. Somebody has shared the basics. Just rely on the information we have in the collections. That is a good idea. Does anyone else have any questions? I would be happy to share any of our calculus or Excel spreadsheets and all of that. But, I do think the real value was making it a part of our total calculus and we quit dealing with it as an adjunct thing. Then, we have adjusted our surveys quite a bit to get two more specific answers because we were not actually, finding out where people were getting some of these things. We thought they were getting them from Westlaw or Alexis and they were getting them from the print CFR. We were surprised.

[Captioners Transitioning]

That is terrific work okay if there are no other questions?

Thank you.

Do you want me to start wrapping this up?

It looks like everybody is signing off thank you for your technical assistance.

We do have some last minute questions.

We also have a library question. How they are going to provide more computers to access that electronic information. And printing and parking are always big problems.

It looks like Laura Baker also had a question. So much over collection analysis is by subject. That does not integrate well. Does anybody have a good way to integrate overall analysis?

We try to catalog them within the classification systems. So that they have their pseudo-acronym. And the other number that we are routinely using. I do not know how others do that.

I am not sure. But we have plenty of time.

If others have comments on how they do that? That would be terrific.

Yes, the chat will be available with the recording.

And Jennifer. That is what we do is integrate. It really helps in all types of ways. Even if it circulates and counted. Yes. That is a terrific seminar. To demonstrate. I am teaching legislative history tomorrow. It is interesting. With the law students. How they do not see how things connect. Until they actually see it. Because they paragraphs and the readings do not make it as real to them as the screenshots. And the real items.

Let me capture your question. And send it out to our library attended service staff. That could be a great question. That would be the best way of doing it. But I will reach out to you for that.

I think a lot of people do that. Two at both sets of numbers. With the Sudoc.

Thank you for presenting. And the next will be identifying Sudoc. And also documenting collection history. It begins at 4:45 p.m. Eastern time. Thank you.